BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Ministry of Management Services

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gems6.gov.bc.ca Issue: 04-03 January 23, 2004

- **BC's inflation rate averages 2.1% in 2003**
- **Shipments by BC manufacturers up 1.0% in November**
- **Visitor entries down 1.1% in November, but overseas entries pick up**

Prices

- **British Columbia's all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 2.1% in 2003, marginally less than in 2002, when the inflation rate was 2.3%.** Rising energy prices were a major inflationary factor during 2003. The cost of energy jumped 6.6% last year, its biggest advance since 2000, when energy prices soared (+18.5%). Consumers paid substantially more for fuel oil (+14.7%), piped gas (+12.6%) and gasoline (+9.4%) in 2003. Prices for other goods and services advanced a more modest 1.8%.

  Food prices rose at an average rate of 1.8% in 2003, largely due to increases in the cost of bakery (+4.8%), dairy (+2.9%), meat (+1.0%) and miscellaneous food (+4.3%) products. However, consumers paid less for fresh fruits and vegetables, while prices for coffee and tea were unchanged from 2002.

  The cost of shelter jumped 1.8%, partly due to higher fuel prices, but also because insurance premiums (+6.8%), property taxes (+3.8%) and repairs (+3.3%) took a bigger bite out of homeowner budgets. Low interest rates kept the cost of borrowing money down, but higher housing prices may have partially offset this effect.

  Tuition fees rose 23.1% in 2003, and this helped push the overall cost of recreation, education and reading materials up 3.4%, as did higher fees for cable services (+7.3%).

  Consumers paid 3.2% more for transportation, with prices for both public (+2.3%) and private (+3.4%) transportation increasing. Gas (+9.4%) and insurance (+6.9%) costs played a role in the increase for private transportation, and also affected fare levels set by operators of airlines, bus and other public transit services.

  Prices for clothing & footwear fell (-1.1%), while health & personal care goods and services cost consumers 0.7% more than in 2002.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **BC's inflation rate was among the lowest in the country in 2003.** Only Manitoba (+1.8%), Whitehorse (+1.9%) and Yellowknife (+1.8%) posted lower increases in the all-items CPI during 2003. In the rest of the country, inflation rates ranged from 2.3% in Saskatchewan to 4.4% in Alberta. The national rate was 2.8%. Vancouver's inflation rate was 2.0%. In Victoria, the overall price level increased 2.2%.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **In *December*, consumer prices rose 1.8% (relative to the same month of 2002).** The province's year-over-year inflation rate was lower than the national average (+2.0%), but still higher than in most parts of the country. Canada's inflation rate was boosted by a 3.0% surge in Ontario's CPI, which is heavily weighted in the overall index because Ontario represents such a big share of the national economy. After Ontario, BC (+1.8%) and Nova Scotia (+1.5%) experienced the biggest overall price increases.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in the province increased 1.0% (seasonally adjusted) between October and November.** The increase in shipments was largely due to an upturn in the wood (+1.4%), paper (+1.2%) and non-metallic minerals (+4.9%) industries. Overall, shipments of durable goods advanced 1.5% in November, while shipments by manufacturers of non-durable products increased 0.4%. However, food (-0.2%) shipments declined for the second month in a row.

  Canadian shipments fell (-0.5%) in November, reflecting continued weakness in Ontario (-1.6%) and Quebec (-0.2%), where the auto sector has been slumping. Total shipments of ve-

Report Female Immigrants: The Last Twenty Years

Did you know...
In December, Canadians checked out 74,631 businesses, made 2,326 verbal complaints and submitted 1,577 written complaints to the Better Business Bureau.

hicles were down 3.6% in November. Excluding the auto sector, Canadian shipments would have edged up 0.1% in that month. However, the downturn was not limited to central Canada. In Alberta, shipments slipped 0.2% and Manitoba posted a 1.6% decline. BC and Atlantic Canada, where shipments rose 6.9% overall, were the only regions to see increases. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Tourism

- **The number of non-residents entering the province from the US and overseas fell again in November (-1.1%, seasonally adjusted), marking the third straight monthly decline.** A three-month-long downturn in entries from the US (-1.8%) was the main reason for the decline. The number of same-day trips from the US to BC fell sharply (-3.6%), and there were 1.1% fewer overnight entries from the US.

  Entries from overseas sources increased 2.2% in November, but Asian entries edged down (-0.2%). A 20.0% increase in the number of visitors from Japan was not enough to offset the effect of fewer entries from other sources, notably Taiwan (-24.2%) and South Korea (-0.8%). Entries from both Europe (+1.3%), and the South Pacific (+3.5%) advanced.

  More Canadians returned home via BC (+5.7%) in November than in the previous month. Overseas travel was up 9.2%, while same-day trips to the US rose (+4.6%) for the seventh straight month. Same-day travel to the States has been picking up recently, partly because a stronger dollar has made shopping and other day trips to the US more affordable for Canadians. *Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

Retirement Plans

- **In 2001, an estimated 390,000 full-time permanent employees in the private sector (about 4% of Canada's private sector workforce) thought they had an employer-sponsored retirement plan, but did not actually have one.** The proportion was twice as high among immigrants who had arrived in Canada in 1991 or later. University graduates, unionized employees, workers in large establishments, and those in finance, insurance, communication and utilities were most likely to have a more accurate view of their pension coverage, although some of them confused RPPs with RRSPs.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

Acquiring New Technologies

- **Four out of ten Canadian companies introduced technological changes between 2000 and 2002.** Within the goods sector, construction (31%) and forestry, fishing & hunting (29%) showed the lowest inclination to adopt improved technologies. The acquisition rate in utilities was substantially higher (73%). Half of all manufacturing firms introduced new technologies during this period. In the service sector, the acquisition rate was lowest in services such as accommodation & food (27%) and transportation & warehousing (27%), and highest in the information & cultural (66%), education (65%) and professional, scientific & technical services (56%) industries. These differences partly reflect the nature of these industries, some of which rely less on technology to produce their outputs.

  Large firms are the most likely to acquire new technologies. Eight out of ten large (500 or more employees) goods sector firms, and nine out of ten in the service sector, adopted new technologies between 2000 and 2002.

  Data Source: SC, Catalogue 88F0006XIE

Stress

- **Most Canadians report having at least some stress in their lives, and over a quarter describe their days as "quite" or "extremely" stressful.** The most common forms of stress cited by adults were chronic strains, such as trying to do too many things at once (cited by 44%), financial problems (38%), and high expectations of other people (31%). Thirty percent of parents were concerned about a child's behaviour. Family health issues, such as drinking or drug problems (14%) or illness (11%) were also significant sources of stress. Women were more likely than men to report chronic sources of stress. Stress levels tended to be lower among people with higher levels of income and education, and to decline with age.

  Data Source: SC, Catalogue 82-003

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Infoline Report

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Originally published in *Immigration Highlights*, Issue 03-3.

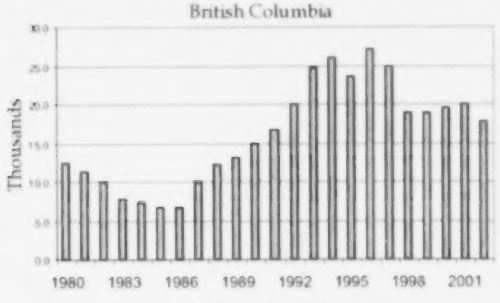
Twenty Years of Female Immigrants to BC

Over the last two decades, the number of female immigrants to British Columbia has been generally increasing from a low of 6,610 persons in 1985, to a high of 27,057 persons in 1996. Figure 1 shows the trend of female immigration from 1980 to 2002.

Most female immigrants from Asia

Most female immigrants arrive from Asian countries. Over the 20 year time period, this trend has become more pronounced. Table 1 presents the top five areas of last residence for female immigrants who landed in Canada from 1981 to 1990 and from 1991 to 2001 and expressed an intention to settle in BC. In the earlier time period of 1981-1990, the majority of female immigrants were residing in Asian countries before arriving in Canada (62%). This proportion increased during the period 1991-2001 to 79%, while the proportion arriving from three of the other top five areas declined substantially. Only Africa retained its share at 3%.

Figure 1: Female Immigrants to British Columbia



Vancouver is the preferred destination

The intended destination of the vast majority of immigrants is Greater Vancouver. If anything, the status of Vancouver as a preferred destination has increased over time. The share of female immigrants to BC whose intended destination was Greater Vancouver increased by about 13 percentage points from 1981-1990 to 1991-2001.

This increased proportion, of course, came from the other potential destinations. Both Greater Victoria and other BC areas became less popular as immigrant destinations over the 20-year period.

Table 1: Top Five World Areas of Last Residence—Females Destined for BC

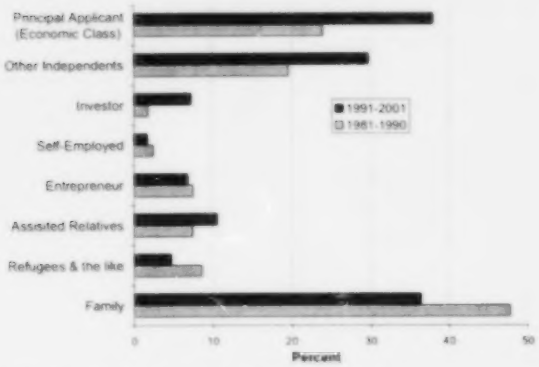
	1981-1990	1991-2001
Asia	62%	79%
Europe	21%	12%
N & C America	11%	5%
Africa	3%	3%
Oceania	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Increasing Proportion of Economic Class Immigrants

Figure 2 indicates that there have been some shifts in the class under which female immigrants have been accepted. Significantly fewer females were admitted under the Family Class in 1991-2001 than in the previous decade. The categories of Investor and Other Independents included a larger proportion of female immigrants in 1991-2001 than in 1981-1990. Furthermore, 38% of female principal applicants in 1991-2001 were admitted as economic immigrants[1] compared to 24% in 1981-1990.

Figure 2: Class of Female Immigrants to BC



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Table 2: Percentage of Female Immigrants by Work Intention

	1981-1990	1991-2001
Intend to Work (Employee)	23%	19%
Intend to Work (Occupation Unspecified)	9%	22%
Intend to Work (Self-Employed)	1%	1%
Student	18%	21%
Not Intend to Work	49%	36%

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

More female immigrants intend to work

Table 2 demonstrates that 42% of females who landed in 1991-2001 stated an intention to work, up from 33% in 1981-1990. Numerous factors likely influence the intention to work. One of these factors may be educational qualifications. Female immigrants with higher levels of education seem more likely to express an intention to work upon arrival. In the period 1981-1990, 59% of immigrant females with a Bachelors degree intended to work, whereas only 28% of those with secondary schooling or less intended to work. During the period 1991-2001, 71% of female immigrants who landed with a Bachelors degree declared an intention to work compared with 31% of those with secondary education or less. The increase in the proportion of females intending to work may also be a function of the increasing numbers of females as principal applicants in the economic classes. Over the two time periods, an increased proportion of females indicated an intention to come to BC to study.

Half of female immigrants need language training

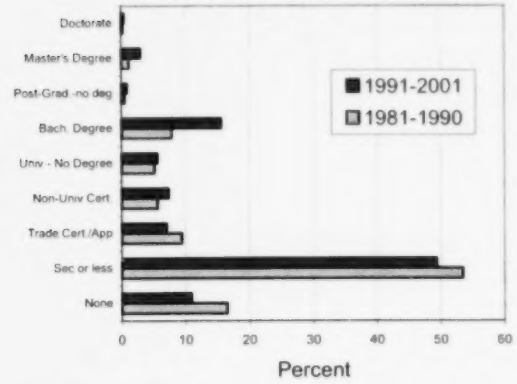
Language competency remains an important issue and the proportion of female immigrants who report no English skills has remained relatively stable over the past two decades. Half the female immigrants to BC in the 1981-1990 period possessed no language skills in English. Between 1991 and 2001, this percentage increased slightly, with 51% reporting no English language skills. Among immigrants, fewer females than males claimed some competency in English in both time periods. According to self-reports, 52% of males possessed language skills in English in both time periods, compared to 49% and 50% of females in 1981-1990 and 1991-2001 respectively.

Education level of female immigrants increasing

The majority of females who arrived in Canada in the 1981-1990 period had secondary schooling or less. About 17% of immigrant females to BC reported no education at all. Females who landed in the 1991-2001 period demonstrated a dramatic increase in educational attainment among immigrants, particularly with regard to higher university degrees. During this later period, only 11% of females reported no education. Sixteen percent of immigrant females held a Bachelors degree, up from 8% during the ear-

lier period. The proportion of females holding graduate degrees and certificates increased from about 1.5% in 1981–1990 to almost 3.5% in 1991–2001.

Figure 3: Educational Attainment of Female Immigrants To BC, 1981-1990 and 1991-2001



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Language training still an important issue

The number of female immigrants who report no English language ability will likely remain high if the number of Asian immigrants remains at the current level. The stock of immigrants who have minimal English skills will likely increase, with the addition of approximately 50% of new females immigrants each year to the population of previous immigrants still engaged in the process of improving language skills. As such, English language training continues to be very important, particularly in the Greater Vancouver area, where recent immigrants tend to settle. Language training is essential for female immigrants who have lower levels of education, since they are more likely to report weaker English language skills than their more highly educated counterparts[ii]. Language ability influences an immigrant's ability to settle in, and allows her greater access to opportunities and services in the community.

Earnings gap for full-time workers

The limitations that a lack of English ability imposes may be one of the reasons for a wage gap between immigrant and non-immigrant females in BC. In 2000, the average income of a non-immigrant female working full-time for a full year was $36,679. In the same year, female immigrants to BC who arrived in the period 1991–2001 earned only 76% of this figure, or $27,766. The picture was better for female immigrants who had been in Canada for a longer period of time. Those who arrived in 1981–1990 earned about 88% of the average for non-immigrant females.

Part-time workers

The earnings gap between immigrant and non-immigrant females is less noticeable for part-time or part-year workers. Non-immigrant females in BC reported an average income of $16,336 in 2000. Immigrant females who arrived in 1991–2001 earned only 81% of this figure in the same year. However, those who arrived earlier, in 1981–1990, exceeded the earnings of non-immigrant females in 2000. Part-time work may be less influenced by factors such as language ability, since many part-time opportunities do not require extensive language skills.

Table 3: Female Earnings in BC, 2000
Immigrant vs. Non-Immigrant Populations

	Full Time		Part Time	
Non-Immigrants	$36,679		$16,336	
	Arrived: 1981-1990		Arrived: 1991-2001	
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
All Female Immigrants	$32,138	$16,923	$27,766	$13,206
From Asia	$30,144	$16,670	$26,257	$12,566
From UK	$38,354	$18,125	$34,028	$18,993

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Asian immigrants earn less than immigrants from the UK

A comparison of the earnings of female immigrants from Asia and those from some English-speaking countries seems to support the idea that the earnings of immigrant females may be influenced by language ability. As well, settlement into the cultural landscape of BC is likely an easier task for immigrants from English-speaking countries than for those from Asia. For example, a comparison between Asia and the United Kingdom (Table 3) demonstrates that female immigrants from Asia, working full-time, earned considerably less than those from the United Kingdom.

Female immigrant earnings by age

Table 4 demonstrates the differential in earnings between immigrant and non-immigrant full-time workers by age. For all groups, the youngest workers earn the least. For non-immigrants, average earnings increase with increasing age. However, the earning pattern by age for immigrants is different. Immigrants aged 45 to 64 years from both the UK and Asia earned less than younger immigrants in the prime working ages of 25 to 44 years.

Table 4: Female Earnings (Full Time) in BC Non-Immigrants vs. Immigrant by Age, Landing Period and Area of Origin, 2000

		15-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years
Non-Immigrant		$19,949	$36,703	$40,059
From UK	1991-2001	$19,645	$36,382	$31,043
	1981-1990	$19,693	$40,447	$39,163
From Asia	1991-2001	$18,215	$27,336	$25,690
	1981-1990	$22,205	$30,563	$30,377

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Lower earnings for most recent arrivals

Regardless of age, earnings vary with the amount of time an immigrant has been in Canada. Those immigrants who are longer-term residents report higher earnings than more recent arrivals.

Wage gap between Asian immigrants and non-immigrants widens with age

There is little difference between the average earnings of most female immigrants from the United Kingdom and those of non-immigrant females in BC. In contrast, most immigrants from Asia earn substantially less than both non-immigrants and immigrants from the UK. The earnings of the youngest Asian immigrants most closely approximate the earnings of non-immigrants. However, the gap between non-immigrant and Asian immigrant earnings is substantial in the older age groups, with the most recent immigrants aged 25–44 years earning only 74% of the earnings of the corresponding non-immigrant population.

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[i] Economic immigrants include those in the Assisted Relatives, Other Independents, Entrepreneur, Self-employed, or Investor Class.

[ii] Over the 20-year period, 15% of female immigrants with no education reported some English language ability whereas about 83% of females with a Bachelors degree claimed to be skilled in English.

Infoline

January 23, 2004

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also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/03	% change on one year ago
BC	4,158.6	0.8
Canada	31,714.6	0.8
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2002	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	135,552	2.7
GDP *($ 1997 millions)*	128,151	2.4
GDP *($ 1997 per Capita)*	31,143	1.5
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	19,576	0.1
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Nov	2,815	1.0
Merchandise Exports - Nov	2,268	-2.8
Retail Sales - Oct	3,413	0.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		12-month avg
(all items - 1992=100)	Dec '03	% change
BC	120.9	2.2
Canada	122.8	2.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Dec '03	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,223	0.3
Employed - BC	2,072	1.2
Unemployed - BC	151	-10.6
		Nov '03
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	6.8	7.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.4	7.5
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jan 21/04	Jan 22/03
Prime Business Rate	4.25	4.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.50	4.90
- 5 year	6.15	6.45
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jan 21/04	Jan 22/03
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3009	1.5320
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.7688	0.6530
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Dec '03	one year ago
BC	679.72	0.5
Canada	668.75	2.7

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

2001 Economic Dependencies & Impact Ratios for 63 Local Areas

British Columbia's Heartland at the Dawn of the 21st Century

This report was prepared to provide economists in the province of British Columbia with up-to-date consistent information on the local economies in the rural areas of the province and to help in the estimation of the economic impacts of changes in those local economies. It is the latest in a series of reports that use data from the Canadian Census and other sources.

Full report is available at:

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/econ_dep.htm

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The December and Annual 2003 CPI were released on Thursday, January 22. Look for updated tables on our site (use the A–Z Index).

Users should note that Statistics Canada's reporting in *The Daily* centred on the "12-month advance" ("12-month change", "12-month increase")[1]. Unfortunately, some media reporting regularly substitutes terms such as "annual CPI" ("annual basis", "annual rate of inflation") while referring to these same 12-month changes.

Reported on this page, and elsewhere by BC Stats, are "12-month average percent changes"[2]. Only when this 12-month period ends in December is the result the true annual average, and can be reported as such.

[1] Current month index compared to index 12 months ago.

[2] Based on average for 12-month period ending in reference month over same period a year earlier.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Consumer Price Index, December 2003

Next week

- Earnings & Employment Trends, Dec. 2003
- Business Indicators, January 2004
- Current Statistics, January 2004

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